



Making sense of expectations and feedback

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Overview

1. Developing a 'nose' for quality
2. The research process
3. When feedback does not connect
4. Dialogic use of exemplars

Aim of paper

- To analyse students' experiences of understanding assessment and feedback processes in the first year



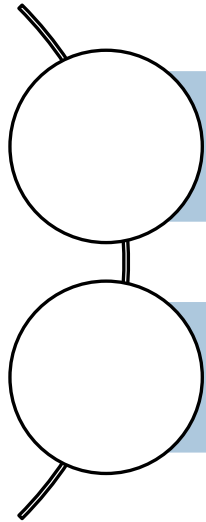
Excellence in University Assessment

LEARNING
FROM AWARD
WINNING
PRACTICE

DAVID CARLESS

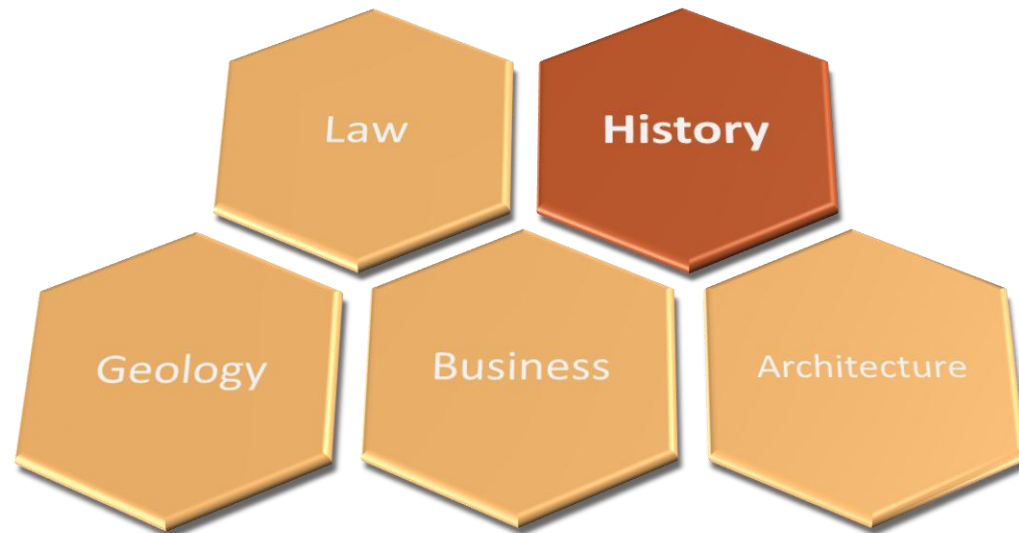


Research process



Classroom observations

Interviews with teachers & students



Making History course

- Foundation level, year 1, 110 students
- ILOs:
 - Critical engagement with representations of past; interpret connections between past & present

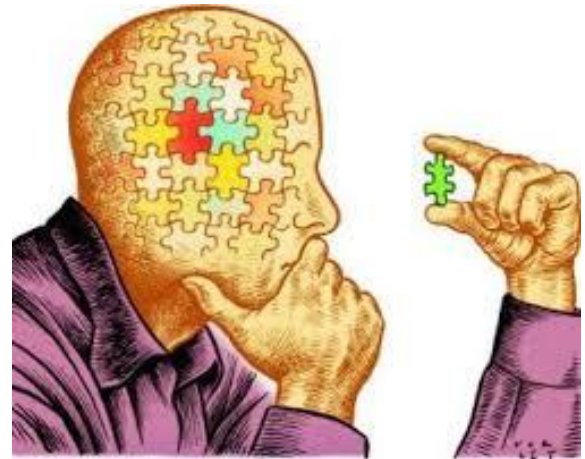




History Assessment

- Fieldwork report (30%): Museum visit
- Individual project (40%): draft 10%, final 30%
- Participation (30%):
 - tutorial participation 15%
 - short weekly written responses 15%

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS





Student views on criteria

- “Assessment criteria are almost the same for every subject: key words like critical or analytic”
- “Such criteria are rather vague to me”
- “I didn’t look carefully at the criteria ... such descriptions are hard for me to understand”

Feedback on Juliet's project

- “He provided me useful critical advice, such as more comparison”
- “I can remember the feedback well because I built it into my final paper”





Juliet's outcomes

- Juliet's grades: A+ (project); B (museum report)
- Uptake of specific feedback comments but ...
- "I never thought of applying a tutor's advice to other assignments"

Link to literature

- Differing perceptions of feedback between staff & students (Adcroft, 2011; Carless, 2006)
- Students chasing what an individual teacher wants (Orsmond & Merry, 2013)





Feedback on Geoff's project

- Feedback: “too narrative ...provide more evidence to support your arguments”
- Student action: reduce details, reduce narrative .. “make it like an essay”

Geoff's confusion

- Outcome: grade C: student frustration
- “If I had known he wanted the details, I should have submitted the first draft ...I am confused about the criteria”





Link to theory

- Externally rather than internally regulated
- Feedback on drafts can lead to dependency
- Academic discourse often does not connect

POTENTIAL WAYS FORWARD



Use of Facebook

- Some students uploaded drafts of work in progress and received peer feedback



facebook

Peer feedback

- Potentially more plentiful ...
- But peers often viewed as lacking expertise



To give is better than to receive



Providing feedback more cognitively engaging
(Lundstrom & Baker, 2009; Nicol et al., 2013)



Exemplars

Exemplars convey messages that nothing else can (Sadler, 2002)

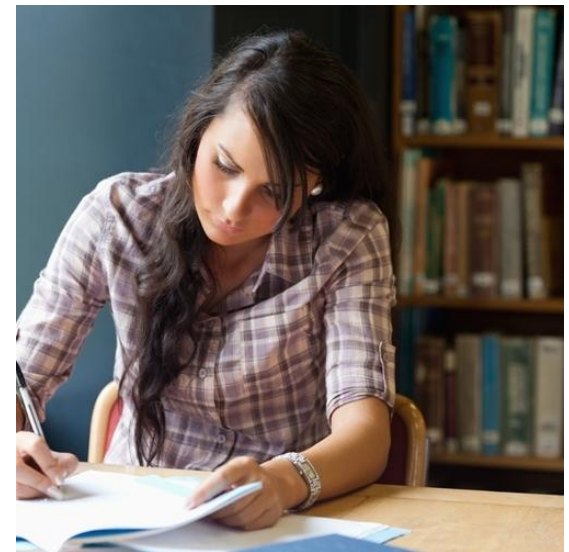
Rationale for exemplar use

- Develop student understanding of criteria and standards (O'Donovan et al, 2004; Hendry et al, 2011)



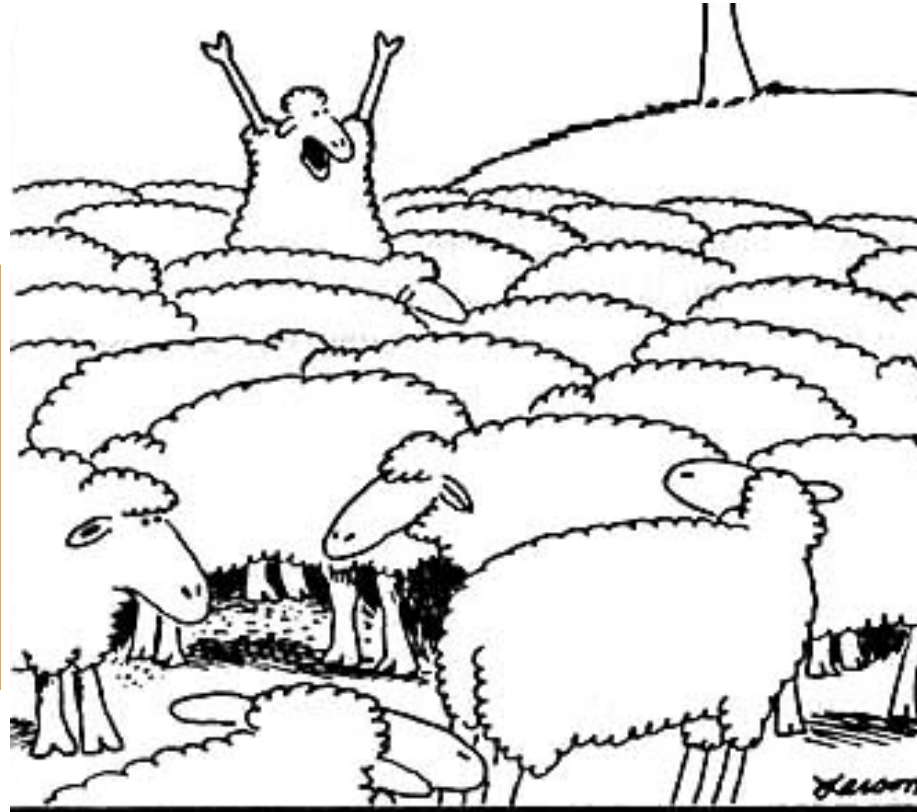
Exemplars & Feedback

- Support students in understanding teacher feedback (Handley & Williams 2011; Orsmond et al. 2002; To & Carless, 2015)



Problem of copying 'models'

**Students
seeing
exemplars as
models**



**Imitation may
lead to
plagiarism**



CONCLUSION



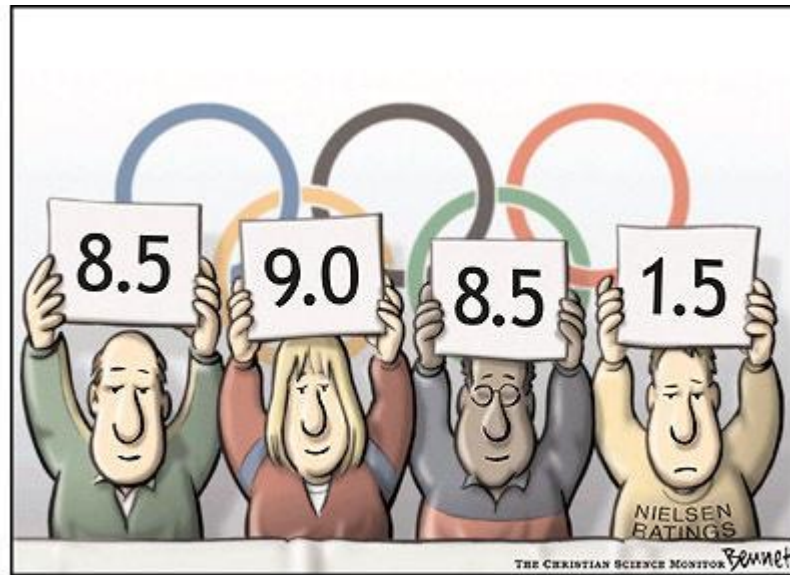
Nose for quality

- Dialogue around exemplars can support students in developing a feel for quality



Learning to make judgments

- Developing expertise in making judgments may help students decode and engage with feedback processes



Closing feedback loops

- It's only feedback if students take some action





Questions or Comments



My definition of feedback

- “A dialogic process in which learners make sense of information from varied sources and use it to enhance the quality of their work or learning strategies”.
- Carless (2015, p.192) building on Boud & Molloy (2013)



Old paradigm

Feedback as
monologic
information
transfer

Conventional
feedback

New paradigm

Feedback as
dialogic
interaction

Sustainable
feedback



Shifts in feedback priorities

Increase	Decrease
In-class dialogic feedback within module time	Unidirectional comments after completion of module
Written feedback comments on first assessment task of module	Written feedback comments on final task of module
Feedback for first year students	Feedback for final year students



The University of Hong Kong